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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY PROMOTE
GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

REF: A. A) STATE 15184

[B. B\)](#) CAIRO 709

[11.](#) Summary. Government of Egypt and civil society representatives hosted two successful events in recognition of the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, April 23-29. Several hundred participants attended events at the World Health Organization's regional office on April 22, and an exhibition at the Ministry of Transportation (MOT) on April 23, focusing on the theme of young road users. Embassy Cairo continues to engage with the GOE and other players on traffic safety issues via USAID assistance and other technical assistance programs. End summary.

WHO AND MOT EVENTS AIMED AT YOUNG ROAD USERS

[12.](#) The World Health Organization in Cairo, based out of its Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, hosted an event on April 22 in honor of United National Global Road Safety Week, April 23-29 (ref A). The event, organized in conjunction with civil society and private sector partners, including participation from the Ministries of Health, Education, and Transportation, focused on "Young Road Users." Road accidents are the leading cause of death for people aged 10 to 24. Several hundred young participants from the Arab Scouts, and local schools and universities heard traffic safety messages from UN and health officials. Popular Egyptian stars and UN Goodwill Ambassadors Yousra and Khalid Abou Naga, in addition to Egyptian road rally champion Abd Al-Hamid Abou Yousef, brought added media attention to the event.

[13.](#) On April 23, officials from the MOT's General Authority for Roads, Bridges, and Land Transportation (GARBLT) hosted an exhibition showcasing various public and private sector initiatives on traffic safety. Exhibitors included British Gas, Shell, Exxon Mobil, the Safe Road Society, and local rotary clubs. A representative from the reform-minded GARBLT recently told Econoff they are now soliciting bids to overhaul the notoriously dangerous Cairo-Alexandria desert road, which should be completed by 2010 (ref B).

SOBERING STATISTICS

[14.](#) While MOT figures estimate 6000 people are killed and 30,000 are injured on Egyptian roads annually, the second highest cause of death after heart disease according to the

GOE, WHO experts say the real figures are likely much higher.

Worldwide, traffic accidents are the primary cause of hospitalization for people aged 15-40. In addition to the high toll on human life, road accidents also put a strain on the economy. WHO estimates road accidents cost Egypt between USD 520 and USD 1 billion annually, significantly higher than other countries in the region.

EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFIC INITIATIVES

¶ 15. In addition to serving on a national multi-sectoral committee to plan events for Global Road Safety Week, post has been involved in a number of initiatives to encourage a culture of safe driving. The USAID supported children's television show "Alam Sim Sim" or "Sesame Street", which began airing on Egyptian television in August 2000, incorporated a traffic safety component into its programming.

The show's programmers' trained 42,000 caregivers and mothers on traffic safety via their Parental Outreach Program. In 2006, USAID provided funding to the Safe Road Society, the only local traffic safety NGO, to create a traffic safety website, CD of games for youth, and a public awareness campaign.

¶ 16. Embassy Cairo also planned and sponsored two trips in 2006 to Egypt for traffic safety expert Rochelle Sobel, founder of the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT). In February 2006, Sobel spoke at a road management conference in Cairo, and engaged with local rotary groups, encouraging them to pursue traffic safety projects. She returned in September 2006, to inaugurate the Nasr City rotary club's projects: traffic safety awareness camps for

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youth and the installation of black boxes into several school and tourist buses.

¶ 17. Post also suggested the creation of a new International Visitor Leadership Program category for 2008 on traffic safety. Two engineers from the Ministry of Transportation have been nominated to participate in a proposed program which will include learning about the engineering aspects of traffic safety. We will continue to engage with GOE, civil society, and private sector partners on traffic safety.

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